

THE DAILY JORDAN
SERIALS DIVISION

Brown gives King Fahd Clinton message

RIYADH (Agencies) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown gave King Fahd a message on bilateral relations from President Bill Clinton after arriving here Saturday for trade talks with Saudi officials, Saudi state radio reported. It did not specify what the message said. Mr. Brown told reporters on arrival that a deal to modernise the national airline Saudia with some 60 airliners at a cost of \$6 billion would be discussed. The European Airbus consortium is also competing for the order. Earlier Mr. Brown said he was confident that U.S. aircraft firms would win the order. Mr. Brown also said he would examine opportunities for U.S. firms to modernise Saudi Arabia's telecommunications network, in talks with Saudi Communications Minister Hussein Mansouri. Several Western companies, including the French firm Alcatel, are competing for the order, up to \$3 billion. Mr. Brown is also due to visit Jordan, Israel and Egypt.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورдан تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية (الرأي)

Iraq seeks help in lifting sanctions

AMMAN (AP) — Iraq is seeking Jordan's intervention with Washington to help lift the sweeping embargo imposed on Baghdad following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, diplomats said Saturday. They said Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, Iraq's international point man during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, arrived in Jordan earlier Saturday to relay Baghdad's request. Iraqi embassy spokesman Adel Ibrahim said Mr. Aziz was scheduled to meet with several Jordanian officials during his two-day stay. He refused to discuss the nature of Mr. Aziz's talks here. But another diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Aziz "wants to ask Jordan to intercede with Washington to lift the unjustified sanctions against the people of Iraq." Jordanian officials said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who is due to leave for the United States within 48 hours, was scheduled to meet with Mr. Aziz on Sunday. Dr. Majali will be joining His Majesty King Hussein for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House on Jan. 21.

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Pope's Lebanon trip to go ahead — Hariri

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri made clear Saturday that Pope John Paul would visit Lebanon this year despite a dispute caused by the Vatican's recognition of Israel. Some Muslim clerics reacted to the recognition last month by saying the Pope should not make the visit expected in May. The pro-Iranian Hezbollah called the recognition "an historic sin" and there has been mounting speculation in the press that the visit might be called off. However, Mr. Hariri told members of Lebanon's journalists union that the recognition was badly timed and damaged Arab interests but Lebanon was still ready to welcome the Pope. "We do not confuse our appreciation and respect for the Pope with the political step of recognising Israel," Mr. Hariri said.

Arab envoy to visit Iraq on 'detainees'

KUWAIT (R) — Arab League officials will visit Iraq this month for talks aimed at securing the release of hundreds of Kuwaitis missing and believed held by Baghdad, a newspaper reported on Saturday. A special delegation would leave for Baghdad on Jan. 20 "in a bid to help release Kuwaiti detainees." Al Anba newspaper reported Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid as saying in an interview, Kuwait says Iraq holds at least 624 people detained during its seven-month occupation of the emirate in 1990-91. These comprise 563 Kuwaitis, 13 Saudis, five Iranians, four Egyptians, four Syrians, three Indians, three Lebanese, an Omani, a Bahraini, a Filipino and 26 stateless Arabs. Iraq denies it still holds anyone detained during the Gulf crisis.

Iran confirms arrests in Tehran attacks

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian authorities confirmed Saturday they have arrested 17 people in connection with attacks on embassies and public areas in Tehran. The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency, IRNA, said four of those arrested were later released after questioning. It quoted police Colonel Reza Mohammadi as saying some of the detainees confessed to having links with the outlawed Mujahedeen-e-Khalq. The Baghdad-based Mujahedeen repeatedly have denied any connection with the attacks. The announcement of arrests by Iranian authorities confirmed a report the day before in the English-language Tehran Times, which quoted an unidentified Interior Ministry source.

Saudi-Yemeni talks on border resume Monday

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi and Yemeni experts Monday will resume talks in Sanaa to resolve a border dispute between the two countries. Yemen's ambassador to Riyadh, Ghaleb Ali Jameel, told AFP on Saturday. The dispute concerns the border provinces of Najran, Jizan and Asir, which came under Saudi control under an agreement signed in 1934. Yemen wants a return of the territories, saying the agreement expired in 1992. It has refused to renew the accord. The Saudi-Yemeni meeting originally scheduled for Dec. 20, is the seventh since the talks on the border issue began more than a year ago. It was delayed at the Yemenis' request when their chief negotiator, Jaafar Saleh, fell ill.

U.S. congressmen visit Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Five United States congressmen arrived here Saturday to check that everything is ready for a smooth handover to the United Nations when American forces withdraw in March. Leading the delegation was representative John Murtha, chairman of the House of Representatives Defence Appropriations Committee, a Democrat from Pennsylvania.

Clinton and Assad meet today amid positive signals

Sarid says Golan 'sovereignty' will have to be returned to Syria • Damascus sees summit success

GENEVA (Agencies) — U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad, who holds the key to an overall Middle East peace, arrived here Saturday amid tight security for a summit aimed at reviving Syrian-Israeli negotiations.

Mr. Assad arrived ahead of Mr. Clinton at the heavily-guarded International Hotel, where the two are to hold their first ever talks, expected to last three hours, on Sunday.

Neither leader made any statement, but official comments from Israel and Syria set an upbeat tone for the summit.

Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said Israel was ready to give up sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which it seized in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, but return for total peace with Syria.

"If Syria is ready for real, total peace, with diplomatic relations, the opening of borders and very detailed security arrangements, Israel will, in exchange, have to give up sovereignty over the Golan," said Mr. Sarid, a leader of the leftist Meretz party.

It was the first time such a high-ranking Israeli official had said Israel was prepared to give up sovereignty over the

Golan. If President Assad spells out to President Clinton at Sunday's summit what type of relations he envisions with Israel, then the Israeli government "will have to make some important and difficult decisions in the near future," Mr. Sarid said on Israel army radio.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Israel was ready to discuss the details of withdrawal if Mr. Assad revealed his position.

"If Clinton tomorrow will hear new things from Assad, we will at this stage certainly be committed ... to start negotiating the borders (between Israel and Syria)," Mr. Beilin said on Israel television.

Mr. Beilin also said that if as part of an agreement, U.S. troops and other international peacekeepers were deployed in a Golan buffer zone, "this would contribute to stability in our region."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said in the past that in exchange for peace he is ready to pull out from part of the Golan, but never spoke publicly of full withdrawal.

"After the summit meeting, Israel will form its position, and act according to what will



Syrian President Hafez Al Assad cups his ears to hear journalists' questions upon arrival at Geneva airport Saturday (AFP photo)

develop. We will not deal with any hypothetical situations," a Rabin aide said Saturday, when asked to comment on Mr. Sarid. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Hawkish opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that Mr. Rabin's government already proposed to Syria some time ago "to carry out complete withdrawal from all of the Golan, until the 1967 lines, a withdrawal in stages." He said Israel also proposed that U.S. forces be deployed in parts of the Golan as a buffer.

Mr. Netanyahu, who

House endorses draft budget 56-20 after marathon debate

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Saturday endorsed the draft budget for 1994 after introducing a number of amendments recommended by the House's Financial Committee.

Fifty-six out of 77 deputies present at the session voted in favour of the budget and 20 voted against it. House Speaker Taher Al Masri did not vote.

In addition to the 16-member Islamic Action Front bloc, leftist deputies Bassam Haddadin, Khalil Haddadin, Toujan Faisal and Mustafa Shmeikat voted against the draft budget.

Deputies cut by JD 6 million the projected JD 66 million current expenditure for 1994 and deleted all references in the draft budget to the controversial sales tax. The Financial Committee recommended reference to the tax be dropped as it has not been approved by the legislature.

The House also approved most of the recommendations of the Financial Committee, which were endorsed separately from the articles of the budget.

Lawmakers added to the recommendations of the committee a proposal that would request the government to include in future draft budgets

details of allocations for governmental institutions which have financial independence.

The proposal was a watered-down version of an original proposal by Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dugmeh to amend the draft budget law itself to include the budgets of these institutions, which are estimated at JD 500 million.

The vote on the budget, which ended around midnight, came at the end of a marathon session during which 72 deputies took the floor.

Many deputies criticised the budget for failing to adequately address the economic challenges facing the country and for not offering appropriate solutions to the problems of poverty and unemployment.

Many deputies also questioned the accuracy of the budget's figures on foreign debts, growth in the gross domestic product, and the rates of poverty and unemployment and inflation. Many lawmakers also said that Finance Minister Sami Gammoh's assertion that the budget was "deficit-free" was misleading.

In a lengthy speech that sought to address most of the remarks raised by deputies, Mr. Gammoh said that the budget was free from the financial deficit that accompanied all the budgets in the history of the Kingdom.

He pointed out, however,

that the budget had an economic deficit which would appear if loans and grants are excluded from the projected revenues.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said the government will study the recommendations of the Financial Committee and will work in cooperation with the House to consolidate the democratic process in the Kingdom.

Dr. Majali said the government would consider the demands and implement what could be carried out in light of the available resources.

He pointed out, however, that it would "take several times the amount of the budget to" meet all those demands. Dr. Majali indirectly criticised the deputies for making recommendations that would reduce revenue and increase expenditure at the same time.

He said that while deputies asked for salary increases for civil servants, reduction in foreign debt and health insurance for all citizens, they also demanded that government reduce direct and indirect taxes, repay its debts and offer more subsidies.

Dr. Majali defended the economic plan of his government saying that it was drafted in a way that corresponded with the needs and aspirations of the budget.

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Jordanian claims for Gulf war at least \$7b

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — Jordanians who fled Kuwait after Iraq's 1990 invasion have submitted claims totalling over \$4 billion to a U.N. compensation fund for victims of the Gulf crisis, Jordanian officials said Saturday.

In addition to private claims, which had to be presented by the end of 1993, officials said Jordan expected to present at least another \$3 billion in state claims.

These have to be submitted by May 1.

"Jordan's individual claims of personal and material losses incurred during the Gulf crisis and filed to the United Nations compensation fund are estimated at \$4 billion," a senior Jordanian official who requested anonymity told Reuters.

He said that while deputies asked for salary increases for civil servants, reduction in foreign debt and health insurance for all citizens, they also demanded that government reduce direct and indirect taxes, repay its debts and offer more subsidies.

They included some who left after the emirate was liberated, although the United Nations does not share Jordan's view that these people are entitled to compensation.

Nearly 713 Jordanians and Palestinians submitted claims

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PLO: Syrian-Israeli progress will benefit all

CAIRO (Agencies) — Chief Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiator Nabil Shaath left for Tunis saying he was optimistic Sunday's U.S.-Syrian summit in Geneva would pave the way towards a Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese return to Middle East peace talks.

If America takes up the issue (of the talks) and if Israel agrees to a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the door will open to Syrian flexibility, and subsequently, Jordan and Lebanon will return to the talks," he said Saturday.

The summit between U.S. President Bill Clinton and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad aims to retrack Israeli-Syrian talks in time for the scheduled resumption of the Middle East peace process in Washington on Jan. 24.

The negotiations have been deadlocked for two years. Syria wants an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan, but Israel says it will not discuss the extent of a pullout until Syria clarifies the nature of a possible peace agreement.

The talks ended on Wednesday with progress reported on

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U.N. official, 10 others wounded in Gaza Strip

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A U.N. field worker from Chicago and 10 Palestinians were wounded in the occupied Gaza Strip on Saturday, when Israeli soldiers opened fire to disperse stone throwers, Arab reporters said.

The American, identified as Terry Grace, 52, was shot in the leg and was in good condition at a Gaza City's Ahli Arab hospital, said a U.N. official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Grace is not ready to publicly commit himself to a timetable. An announcement by Mr. Assad that he is ready for full peace may provide the right opportunity for Mr. Grace to move on the Syrian track," said a European diplomat in Damascus.

Such an announcement by Mr. Assad could give Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, under domestic pressure because of rising violence and stalled talks with the PLO, enough ammunition to pull

(Continued on page 5)

right door and hit Mr. Grace, who was sitting next to his Palestinian driver.

The Gaza Strip was paralysed on Saturday by a general strike called by the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas in protest at the killing of five of its members.

Demonstrators hurled stones, burned tyres and blocked roads, sources said.

On Friday Israeli soldiers shot dead four Hamas members in the West Bank town of Hebron, after surrounding the house where they were holed up.

An Israeli army spokesman said the leader of the Hamas armed wing Ezzedin Al Qassam in the Hebron region was among those killed.

In another incident, a knife-wielding Hamas man stabbed to death a Russian immigrant on the edge of the Gaza Strip and wounded another Israeli on Friday before troops shot him dead.

Some 100 Hamas supporters marched through Gaza City's main thoroughfare, Omar Al Mukhtar street, chanting: "Stabbings, suicide attacks and car-bombs are our way to paradise."

Priorities could converge in Geneva to lift Mideast logjam

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

QUNEITRA — High atop the Golan Heights, Israeli soldiers look down at United Nations peacekeepers patrolling the Syrian-Israeli demarcation line and Syrian troops roaming in the ruins of Quneitra, a city destroyed by Israel when it withdrew in 1974 from a part of the Golan Heights it occupied in the 1967 war.

The return of the strategic plateau to Syrian sovereignty is certainly one of the top items on President Hafez Al Assad's agenda for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Geneva today.

The much-heralded summit signals an end to a Syrian boycott of the two-year-old talks with Israel after Damascus felt left out when the Palestine Liberation Orga-

nisation (PLO) and Israel signed their groundbreaking autonomy accord on Sept. 13.

President Assad is expected to lay down Syrian (and Lebanese by implication) positions and perhaps meet the Israeli call for an open statement on Damas-

cus' definition of "total peace." Equally important, Mr. Assad will also seek American perceptions of Syria's role in a post-peace process Middle East.

They say that while the summit is certainly a boost for Mr. Assad's stature, they do not expect the meeting to result in dramatic breakthroughs. In talks with the American president, Mr. Assad will rely on a number of strong cards, including the security of Israel's northern borders, the Palestinian groups that oppose the "Gaza-Jericho first" agree-

ment and Syria's strategic alliance with Iran and with the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) which is waging a separatist war in Turkey, an American ally.

Mr. Clinton "expects" the summit to produce a Syrian announcement of Damascus' readiness to establish "diplomatic relations" with Israel if the Israelis withdraw from the Golan and Lebanon, without linking this with the completion of the withdrawal process.

Syria is insisting that any announcement of its readiness for full peace with Israel be conditional on the preparation of a clear timetable for a full Israeli withdrawal.

Such an announcement by Mr. Assad could give Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, under domestic pressure because of rising violence and stalled talks with the PLO, enough ammunition to pull

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Middle East News

Experts say Clinton should be cautious with Assad in Geneva

By Alan Elsner

Reuter

WASHINGTON — Veterans of past encounters say President Bill Clinton must be wary when he meets Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva Sunday and avoid being drawn into too much detail.

This will only be the fourth meeting between a U.S. president and Syrian president and the first to take place against a background of an ongoing Arab-Israeli peace process.

In the three previous meetings, the United States was represented by Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and George Bush.

All three times, the man across the table was Syria's seemingly perennial leader, Mr. Assad. Twice, in the case of Mr. Nixon and Mr. Carter, he coaxed his U.S. interlocutors into saying things they may later have regretted.

"Assad is far more experienced and knowledgeable on the issues he cares about than any American he meets. It's very important for Clinton to know exactly what he wants out of the meeting," said William Quandt who advised Mr. Carter in his 1977 encounter with Mr. Assad and sat in on the meeting.

The main aim for Mr. Clinton is to reenergize the Middle East peace process, specifically by pressing Mr. Assad to inject more substance into the deadlocked Israeli-Syrian talks.

These negotiations, scheduled to resume in Washington

on Jan. 24, have essentially been at an impasse for two years over the same point.

Syria wants Israel to commit itself to full withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights but Israel says it will only discuss the extent of its withdrawal when Syria spouts out the kind of peace agreement it is prepared to offer in exchange.

Will it be peace in the narrow sense of non-belligerency, or will it include the establishment of diplomatic relations, economic and trade ties, tourism and cultural and sporting exchanges as Israel is demanding?

Bilaterally, Syria remains on the U.S. list of states supporting what Washington defines as global terrorism and is listed as a country which aids and abets the international drug trade.

For Mr. Assad on the other hand, this is his most important meeting of the year and possibly for several years. He has been planning his strategy and tactics for weeks.

By all accounts, Mr. Assad

relishes his encounters with U.S. presidents and secretaries of state and is famous for subjecting them to two- or three-hour lectures on the history from the time of the Crusades to the present day.

Former Secretary of State James Baker called his meetings with Mr. Assad "bladder diplomacy" because it was considered bad form to leave the room for the toilet.

"Assad loves these meetings. He approaches them like a marathon and can be counted on to be in good shape," said Richard Haas, a Mideast adviser to former President George Bush, now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

But by December, when Secretary of State Warren

Yasser Arafat's leadership apparatus is exposed to infiltration.

Such charges are sensitive as PLO is preparing for a limited autonomy in the West Bank town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip under its recent agreement with Israel.

The sources said the PLO had summoned Mr. Abu Ouf from London, where he was visiting a brother, but refused to say how.

Despite his alleged espionage, Mr. Abu Ouf will also be investigated for possible connections to the killings of PLO leaders in the Strip after the signing of the accord with Israel, the sources said.

It is not clear what role Mr. Abu Ouf had in the organization, although his family is believed to have ties with Mr.



STRANDED: An Afghan refugee girl Friday waits for her turn to board a United Nations truck in an attempt to enter Pakistan on the Afghanistan-Pakistani border (see page 10). Re-

ports said Saturday the thousands who were waiting after Pakistan closed the border returned to Jalalabad, midway between Kabul and the border (AFP photo)

PLO arrests Gazan for alleged spying

TUNIS (AP) — Palestinian security agents have arrested a Palestinian man from the Israeli-occupied territories on charges of spying for Israel, sources said Saturday.

Ahmed Abu Ouf, 24, a native of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip, was apprehended Monday in Tunis after arriving on a flight from London, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

It was the first time the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) arrested a resident of the occupied territories on charges of passing secrets to Israel since the movement transferred its main operation to Tunisia in 1982.

The arrest comes several months after the arrest of an alleged spy for Israel shook the organization with fears that

Arafat and his mainstream Fatah faction.

The sources said the PLO believes Mr. Abu Ouf was an important agent for the Israelis, supplying crucial information about PLO operations in Gaza.

Last November, Tunisian police arrested Adnan Yassin, deputy to Hakam Balawi, the PLO's representative to the Tunis government, on charges of spying for Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency.

He was later handed over to the PLO and has allegedly confessed, according to PLO sources.

The PLO believes thousands of Palestinians have collaborated with Israeli authorities in the occupied territories. Palestinian death squads have killed 789 of them.

Shamir admits ordering death of terror colleague

TEL AVIV (R) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir admits in his memoirs that he ordered the killing of a colleague in a Jewish terror group fighting British authorities 50 years ago.

The victim, Eliyahu Giladi, was too ready to sacrifice human lives and had to be stopped. Mr. Shamir said in an excerpt of his memoirs published in *Yedioth Ahronot* newspaper.

It has been widely charged but never proven that Mr. Shamir, as leader of the notorious anti-British Lehi or Stern gang, ordered the execution of his deputy Giladi in 1943.

"I am strong in my opinion I had no alternative — although the deed took a heavy personal price from me and cost me much suffering," Mr. Shamir said in the first of a series of excerpts of his forthcoming memoirs entitled "B'sicum Shel Davar" (in the final analysis).

Mr. Shamir, who was defeated by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1992 elections, said Mr. Giladi's proposals included inciting British soldiers to fire on Jewish demonstrators to increase public opposition to British rule in Palestine.

Mr. Giladi eventually talked about killing David Ben-Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister after the Jewish state was created in 1948 and was ideologically opposed to the Lehi.

Shamir said he began to fear Giladi was "out of his mind." "Before me stood a man who was seriously endangering the mere existence of Lehi and all that was connected to it... I knew I had to take a fateful decision — and I didn't evade it... the decision was taken and executed," Mr. Shamir wrote.

Mr. Shamir was one of three men who led the Lehi — the Hebrew acronym for freedom fighters for Israel — after British police killed its founder



Yitzhak Shamir
Avraham Stern in 1942.

Lehi was the smallest and most hardline of three terror groups fighting for a Jewish state. It was known for assassinating high-ranking British officials.

There was an outcry in Sweden in 1988 when two Lehi veterans revealed their part in the 1948 killing of Sweden's Count Pehr Bernadotte. Bernadotte was the U.N.'s first mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Djerejian hopes Geneva summit will be positive

TEL AVIV (AP) — U.S. Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian said Friday he was hopeful a weekend meeting between President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad will lead to "substantive movement" towards Israeli-Syrian peace.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Assad are to meet Sunday in Geneva for talks in which Israel's hope Mr. Assad will spell out for the first time whether he is offering the Israeli full peace it seeks in return for the Golan Heights.

"We hope that the results of that meeting will provide the basis for substantive movement forward in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations," Mr. Djerejian told reporters after an hour-long meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Friday.

Mr. Djerejian said American officials were planning to arrive in Israel by Sunday night to brief Mr. Rabin on the Geneva meeting.

He declined to assess the chances for a breakthrough or say whether Mr. Rabin had indicated what his reaction would be to a positive statement by Mr. Assad.

It was the first meeting between Mr. Rabin and Mr. Djerejian, who took up his post Thursday. The ambassador, who speaks Arabic and is a former U.S. envoy to Damascus, is viewed by many in Israel as a potential mediator in the negotiations.

The Ma'ariv daily reported Friday that U.S. diplomats have informed Israel secretly that Mr. Assad is ready to publicly accept the "magic formula" of diplomatic relations and full normalization in areas like trade and tourism.

Also Friday, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said he expected a quick resolution in this round of talks with the Palestinians, due to resume Monday.

Reagan, Meese drop bid to suppress report

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Attorney General Edwin Meese joined ex-President Ronald Reagan Friday in ending their court battle to suppress the Iran-contra prosecutor's highly critical final report.

But release of independent counsel Lawrence Walsh's report next week still could be blocked if former White House aide Oliver North asks the supreme court to review a Jan. 7 federal appeals court order.

Mr. Kinkel urged Tehran to lift the death decree imposed on Mr. Rushdie by the late Ayatollah Khomeini for the author's novel "The Satanic Verses."

He said his meeting with Mr. Rushdie in Bonn on Dec. 9 underscored the importance of Germany attached to the freedom of speech as a basic human right.

Mr. Kinkel also appealed for clemency for German engineer Helmut Szimkus, saying the Bonn government considered the case "an extraordinary serious matter."

Iran's supreme court last week upheld the death sentence against Mr. Szimkus, convicted for spying for Iraq.

The American Jewish Committee last month criticized Germany's relations with Iran and said Bonn's argument that Tehran could only be coaxed

NEWS IN BRIEF

Train smashes into bus in Algeria; 22 dead

ALGIERS (R) — An Algerian freight train smashed into a bus at an unguarded crossing Friday, killing 22 people and injuring 39, the state news agency APS reported. The freight train barrelled into the bus near the town of Mouzaia, about 50 kilometers southwest of the capital, and sliced it in half. Carrying about 65 people from Algiers to the western Algeria SPA town of Bou Hamra, the bus turned off the main road to cut across the tracks at an unofficial crossing, one passenger said. "The driver didn't see the train and even when the train whistled, instead of reversing he tried to go forward," the man told Algiers Television. "I was the last person trapped on the bus, which was cut in half with its engine still running." State television showed footage of the mangled remains of the bus, its seats crumpled and its metal casing ripped to pieces. "It was terrifying," said another passenger. "I was thrown nearly 10 meters and landed on people who were in a state that I don't want to describe." Dozens of people were taken to hospitals in neighbouring towns of Blida and Al Arouf for treatment. A doctor at one hospital said neighbouring families brought extra beds to help cope with the overflow of patients, some of whom were shown lying on mattresses on the floor.

Doctor forgets his own medicine

CAIRO (R) — A plane carrying 229 passengers from Cairo to New York turned around just 10 minutes after take-off when a doctor on board said he had forgotten his own medicine. Officials at Cairo airport said Kazem Farag needed to take injections every four hours for a kidney complaint and would not have survived the 12-hour journey. They said he had left his syringes in a bag belonging to his brother, who had been supposed to fly with him but had not been allowed on the flight. The plane returned to Cairo, dropped Dr. Farag off, and took off again without him, they said.

Abducted Assyrian priest released

IDIL, Turkey (AP) — An Assyrian priest who was abducted five days ago has been released, police sources reported. The Rev. Melki Tok of the Assyrian Church was released Thursday near the site of his abduction in this town in southeastern Turkey, said a police source on condition of anonymity. Rev. Tok was from the Mor Gabriel Monastery. Another priest from the same monastery was abducted last February and never returned. Local authorities said they believe Kurdish separatists were responsible for the kidnappings. The extremists are opposed to socialist Kurdish separatists, from the Kurdish Labour Party, who are waging a guerrilla war in the southeast. The region home to an estimated 5,000 Assyrian Christians. Members of the church also live in Iran, Syria and India.

Israeli denies attempted murder in Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — An Israeli facing charges of attempted murder in Cyprus pleaded not guilty on Friday before a criminal court in the port city of Limassol. Mordechay Ben Mayer, 40, a factory worker who tried to escape by jumping from a court window last December, is the only suspect in the attempted murder of a Limassol diamond merchant on Nov. 4. Philokypros Matheou, 46, was stabbed by a hooded man in the port city but survived. Hours after the stabbing police arrested Mr. Mayer and his girlfriend Paula Fargon, 33, a secretary, as they prepared to board a plane to Tel Aviv at Larnaca airport. Both were remanded but Ms. Fargon was released on Nov. 16 after police found nothing incriminating against her. Mr. Mayer will stand trial on Feb. 22.

Israeli shelling wounds shepherd in Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (R) — Israeli forces shelled the area round a South Lebanon village just north of their occupation zone Friday, wounding a shepherd, security sources said. A dozen artillery shells fired from inside the zone slammed around the village of Shaqra, wounding the herder and killing a large number of sheep, they added. Guerrillas of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God) are active in Shqara. In a separate incident in the south, a Hezbollah guerrilla was wounded in a clash between members of the group and Syrian-backed Amal movement in the village of Kibrit Silm. The sources said the brief clash was sparked by a dispute over the use of a mosque in the village.

Group accuses Syria of rights abuse

PARIS (R) — A Syrian opposition group alleged on Friday ahead of President Hafez Al Assad's meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton that Damascus had jailed thousands of opponents without trial and systematically tortured detainees. The Paris office of the League for the Defense of Political Detainees in Syria said it was asking Amnesty International and other organizations to denounce human rights abuse before the meeting in Geneva on Sunday. The group alleged that Mr. Meese concocted a false account of one of the arms-for-hostages deals with Iran, according to other sources close to the probe, who have read portions of the Walsh document. Both sets of sources spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Once Walsh's report is made public," lawyers "will address both the report's outrageous content and the irresponsible conduct of Lawrence Walsh," said Mark Levin of the Landmark Legal Foundation, a conservative public interest law firm representing Mr. Meese.

"We look forward to the next step, which is to publicly confront Walsh's false statements head on," Mr. Levin added. "The (former) attorney general acted properly and responsibly in every aspect of this matter."

On Thursday, Reagan lawyer Theodore Olson said the former president's conduct in Iran-contra "was above reproach" and that he would not seek supreme court review — which could further delay the report's release.

Mr. Walsh's report concludes that Mr. Reagan failed to "set the stage" for the Iran-contra scandal's illegal activities, according to the second set of sources.

U.N. envoy expects developments in Cyprus

ANKARA (R) — A senior U.N. official said on Friday he was hopeful that the two sides in divided Cyprus would soon agree on confidence-building measures. "We hope developments on confidence measures will reach a rapid conclusion," Gustave Feissel, special envoy for Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, said after meeting Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister Hakkı Atun.

Market prices

	Arr. Damasus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damasus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday	
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday	
DEPARTURES		
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)		
06:00	Bahrain (RJ)	Upper/lower price in fik per kg.
06:35	Tunis-Carthage (RJ)	
10:50	Naxxar (RJ)	
11:10	Rome (RJ)	Apple..... 750/400
11:30	Banana (RJ)	Banana..... 680/300
12:00	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	Banana (Mukammal)..... 620/300
12:45	Athens (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
13:45	Carri (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
14:45	Jeddah (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
20:45	Damascus (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
21:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
21:25	Paris, Berlin (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
21:30	New Delhi (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
22:05	London (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
22:30	Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)	Cream (RJ)..... 480/300
22:45	Bangkok (RJ)	Eggsplant..... 680/300
		Garlic..... 900/600
		Grape, Grapes..... 700/500
		Lemon..... 160/100



DISCUSSING RADIO, TV PLANS: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, Regent, Saturday visited the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation and met with its director general, Radi Alkhas and his assis-

tants. The Prince was briefed on the corporation's plans and production of programmes. He also toured part of the corporation's sections (Petra photo).

Princess Basma leaves for meeting on development

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday called on the United Nations to corroborate its social, economic and environmental roles around the globe and help build up individual nations' capabilities in these fields.

The new facts emerging in a post cold war era bring out numerous challenges which call for increased United Nations attention, said Princess Basma shortly before leaving for New York to attend a special U.N.-organised meeting to discuss development.

The world organisation has set up a special high level advisory task force to help formulate concepts and future programmes for the United Nations development programme in the current decade.

The coming U.N. meeting reflects the organisation's deep concern for the need to enhance socio-economic and environmental concepts which will be acted upon in cooperation with world governments.



said the Princess.

Among the issues emerging around the world in the post cold war era, said Princess Basma, are poverty, natural and environmental catastrophes, famine, refugees, and the break up of communities, all of which endanger mankind and world security.

The components of peace comprise human rights, respect of mankind's dignity, democracy and protection of the environment which, she said, go hand in hand with socio-economic development.

The Princess stressed the need for new modern patterns of management and financing of socio-economic programmes and close cooperation among world nations.

Thanking the United Nations for electing her as a member of the task force to deal with these questions, Princess Basma said her election represented an appreciation of Jordan as a country with pioneering experiments in the field of socio-economic development.

Arab union officials seek to enhance work

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates of federations of labour unions from seven Arab countries gathered at the Jerusalem Hotel in Amman Saturday for a two-day workshop on workers' rights and means of bolstering the work of their unions.

Khaled Shreim, FJLU secretary general, welcomed the delegates who included representatives of labour unions in Palestine.

Mr. Shreim outlined Jordanian labour laws and regulations and workers' gains, privileges and rights.

Referring to the workshop, he said it was organised in view of the urgent need of the Arab labour unions for advice and guidance concerning labour-related problems, workers' rights in forming unions, and other topics.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Iahas urges private hospitals to extend emergency care

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Malhas Saturday urged private hospitals to offer medical services to emergency cases under any circumstances. In a circular sent to these hospitals, Dr. Malhas said the private facilities can ask for any form of guarantees other than cash and obtain the hospitals' financial support after providing the necessary medical treatment.

Yarmouk JUST heads meet Kirghiz minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Mohammad Kamal Saturday received visiting minister of higher education in the Kirghiz Republic, Askar Kakiev, and discussed with him plans of establishing of scientific and academic operation between the university and universities in the new republic. Dr. Kamal briefed Mr. Kakiev and the accompanying delegation on the establishment and development of the university. Mr. Kakiev and the delegation also visited the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) where they were received by University President Kamel Al Ajlouni. Discussion at the meeting focused on academic cooperation between JUST and Kirghiz universities.

RJ to fly to new Al Ain airport

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Director of Civil Aviation at Abu Dhabi International Airport Sheikh Hamdan Ben Mubarak Al Nahayan Saturday discussed with a delegation representing Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, the inauguration of a new route between Jordan and Al Ain International Airport once it opens. Sheikh Mubarak voiced his delight over having RJ as one of the first airlines to use the airport. Jordanian ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Awwad Abu Obeid, who was present at the meeting, said RJ's operation of the new route affirms the brotherly relations between Jordan and the UAE.

JPMC discusses 5-year plan

SHIDIYEH (Petra) — The board of directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Saturday held a meeting at its premises in Al Shidiyeh phosphate mines in southern Jordan and discussed the company's five-year development plans. Company Director General Sami Al Madani said, Mr. Madani said the meeting focused on financial matters in addition to issues pertaining to increasing the company's production. The board also discussed the prospect of expanding the Shidiyeh mines, the industrial complex in Aqaba and other projects.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Centre.

* Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artist and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh.

POETRY RECITAL

* Recital of Ibrahim Nasrallah poems (to be sung by Kamal Khalil) to late music) at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh at 7:00 p.m.

Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Sheikh at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talismans" at Baladina Art Gallery.

Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural



Iraq to continue supplying oil to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq has agreed to continue supplying oil to Jordan under an exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council during talks in Baghdad last week between Jordan's energy and natural resources minister and Iraqi officials, informed sources said.

They said Minister Walid Asfour held a series of talks starting with Iraqi Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad and other ministers as well as Prime Minister Ahmad Hussein Khudayir.

Dr. Asfour also met with presidential adviser Jaafar Jaafar, reports from Baghdad said.

"During the talks, Iraq agreed to renew the annual

agreement on oil supplies to Jordan and the accord could be formalised soon," said one source. No details of the agreement were immediately available; nor was it known whether it differed much from the 1993 accord.

Under a tacit exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council, which imposed a sweeping international embargo against Iraq following Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq is allowed to export oil to Jordan.

Jordan gets an average of 50,000 barrels of crude oil and 20,000 barrels of fuel oil from Iraq trucked over daily to the Kingdom's refinery in Zarqa.

No cash is changing hands in the deal since the oil is supplied partly free and partly in

settlement of Iraqi debts to Jordan.

The sources said the main purpose of Mr. Asfour's visit to Baghdad, where he arrived Wednesday, was to renew the oil agreement and that he also held general discussions on Jordanian-Iraqi ties and prospects of cooperation after the expected lifting of sanctions.

The (Iraqi) government is highly hopeful that the sanctions could be lifted before April, although U.N. officials have said that it could not be done before June," said a diplomatic source.

According to the source, the Iraqi government, which accepted long-term monitoring of its weapons programme late last year after a protracted stand-off with the U.N., was focusing on the work of U.N.

inspectors in Iraq with a view to getting a clean certificate from them before March.

"Iraqi officials have been holding extensive discussions with representatives of major international oil companies on post-sanctions cooperation," said a highly-informed diplomat. "These included American as well European, particularly French and Italian firms."

Also expected to be raised during Dr. Asfour's visit to Baghdad was Jordanian concern over the impact of the reopening of Iraq's Umm Qasr Port on the flow of Iraq-bound cargo through Aqaba.

In talks in Amman in late November, Iraqi officials assured Jordan that the flow of Iraqi imports, which has dwindled to 20 per cent of pre-crisis levels, would con-

tinue and that Umm Qasr, Iraq's only outlet to the Gulf, would be used to accommodate small freighters with cargo from the far east.

The U.N. Security Council is due to meet on Tuesday to decide whether to maintain the international embargo against Iraq.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported late Saturday that Jordan and Iraq signed an agreement in which they agreed to cooperate in "all key oil industries, including excavating and digging."

The agreement covers bilateral cooperation in all the sectors of the oil industry, including drilling and exploration, along with Iraqi technical assistance for the Jordanian oil industry and training for Jordanian oil workers, INA said.

AFM trading continues upward swing

Commercial banks benefit from doubling of trade volume

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading in the Amman Financial Market (AFM) continued an upward swing, with the weekly volume doubling in two weeks, figures released by the market showed Saturday.

Shares worth JD26,565 million changed hands during the week ending Thursday compared with JD13,46 million in the previous week.

In the parallel market, where shares of companies with not fully paid up capital are traded, the volume went down to JD2,32 million from JD2,77 million in what brokers described as a small indication of investors' shift to stocks of established companies.

Commercial banks were the main beneficiary in the surge in AFM trading, after investors zeroed in on them following the signing of the Jordan-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) economic cooperation accord on Jan. 7.

The banking sector accounted for more than 40 per cent of AFM trading in the last two weeks.

Among other things, the Jordan-PLO accord clears the way for the reopening of the branches of Jordanian commercial banks in the occupied West Bank, closed when Israel seized the territory in the 1967 war.

Shares of the Bank of Jordan,

one of the banks poised to reopen in the West Bank, closed Wednesday at JD4,890, compared with JD4,570.

Arab Bank shares went up an opening price of JD200 in the week, but closed at JD191 on Wednesday. Brokers said the decline was partly because of official statements that banks will be only allowed to reopen their West Bank branches one by one.

The Arab Bank, Jordan's largest commercial bank, was earlier reported to be preparing to open more than 10 branches in the occupied territories.

Bankers and officials said one of the main reasons for the rise in the stock market was the lifting early this month of certain curbs on commercial bank credits. While the decision by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) did not immediately pump in huge amounts into the market, it did help boost investors' confidence in the national economy, they said.

Omaya Touqan, director-general of the AFM, was quoted as saying: "the increase in activities at the stock market is a result of the Central Bank of Jordan's decision, which boosted investor confidence, and the economic agreement signed between Jordan and the PLO."

"Both moves have created a kind of optimism that is

reflected in all trade and investment activities," Dr. Touqan said.

Brokers said it was also natural that investors' interest remains high in the beginning of the financial year when most firms release annual figures. As such, they said, there was always a minimum level of trading in stocks during January higher than earlier months.

This level, they said, was boosted by the additional factors that come into play after the recent CBJ moves and the Jordan-PLO agreement.

"It is a combination of factors," said a veteran broker.

over Jordan's role in the peace process and regional economy.

That uncertainty was cleared to a large extent by the signing of the Jordan-PLO agreement on economic cooperation.

Of course, the signing of the Jordan-PLO economic agreement injected a fresh impetus into the market, but a lot remains unclear," said a banking official. "Investors are looking for some detailed insight into the actual economic role Jordan and the Jordanian private sector will be playing in the Jordanian economy."

Jordan, Yemen sign customs memo

AMMAN (Petra) — A team from the Yemeni Customs Department Saturday wound up a nine-day visit to Jordan by signing a memorandum paving the way for cooperation with the Jordanian Customs Department in several fields.

Under the terms of the memorandum, Jordan and Yemen will exchange information related to smuggling operations and will coordinate efforts related to customs work, tariffs and other customs-related affairs.

The two sides also agreed to organise training courses for customs officers, exchange expertise and information related to technical work such as defining prices, analysis, classification, temporary entry of goods and the treatment of semi-finished industrial products.

The agreement also covered programmes for exchanges of visits by officials from the two sides and cooperation in upgrading administrative functions.

Yemen is to benefit from the Jordanian experiments in preparing lists of customs tariffs, airport customs work and customs operations at ports and border posts.

The memorandum was signed by Mohammad Jamal, director of customs and Abdul Rahman Kahali, head of the Yemeni Customs Department.

During the visit Mr. Kahali and his team toured the customs offices in Amman, Ramtha, the Zarqa and Aqaba free zones, Queen Alia International Airport as well as the Mudawara Customs Office in the southeast.

The Yemeni team later left for home.

Minister to outline Kingdom's achievements in environmental protection at international forum

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Akaih Saturday said that he would present several working papers dealing with the environment in Jordan at an international meeting in Buenos Aires opening Monday.

The papers will outline Jordan's achievements with regard to environmental protection as provided for in the National Strategy on the Environment which was prepared in cooperation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Under the terms of the memorandum, Jordan and Yemen will exchange information related to smuggling operations and will coordinate efforts related to customs work, tariffs and other customs-related affairs.

Organised by the IUCN, the meetings are scheduled to last until Jan. 26 and be attended by delegates from nearly all the world's nations, said Mr. Akaih, who will lead the Jordanian team to the meetings.

The delegation will take part in at least three workshops at the international gathering in the Argentine capital to discuss environment-related issues, according to Mr. Akaih.

The team will coordinate its stand with the other Arab delegations attending the meeting, especially in matters related to environmental planning, the creation of national parks, setting up of wild life reserves and legislation covering

the environment.

More than 3,000 delegates are expected to attend the international meeting which is held at the General Assembly level once every three years, according to Mr. Akaih.

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the environment.

A society spokesman said that registration would help the society organise and encourage Jordanian exports of fruits and vegetables and enter into new markets abroad in cooperation with the support of Jordanian authorities.

The society will begin on research, management and encouragement of exports of new types of fruits and vegetables, advise farmers on modern means of harvesting crops, as well as packaging and transporting produce, said the spokesman.

He said that the society will also publish daily bulletins of product prices in international markets and the amounts and specifications of fruits and vegetables required in world markets.

The announcement coincided with a statement by the Agricultural Marketing Orga-

nisation (AMOI) that Jordan's fruit and vegetable exports to foreign and some Arab states increased noticeably last year.

AMOI Director General Salem Lawzi said that Jordan's exports of these products increased by 22.4 per cent to non-Arab states, 9.2 per cent to Bahrain, 19 per cent to Lebanon, 17 per cent to Qatar and 15 per cent to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

According to Dr. Lawzi, tomatoes accounted for 44.6 per cent of total exports, followed by oranges and cucumbers.

But, he noted, lesser quantities of eggplants, peppers, lemons and marrow were also exported to these countries last year.

At the same time, Jordan's imports of fruits and vegetables in 1993 dropped by around 38.8 per cent over the previous year.

Jordan, he said, imported onions, dates, apricots, apples, potatoes, cherries and grapes last year.

Department assists 460 needy families

SOUTH SHUNEH (Petra) — The Social Development Department in the South Shuneh district has given recurrent assistance worth JD 165,000 to 460 needy families during 1993, according to department director Miftah Al Jagheer. Mr. Jagheer said the department has also presented urgent help to 12 needy families. The department, he added, also allocated JD52,000 income-generating projects for 43 poor families.

Produce export society registration approved

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Society for the Export of Fruits and Vegetables Saturday said that it has secured approval for its official registration.

A society spokesman said that registration would help the society organise and encourage Jordanian exports of fruits and vegetables and enter into new markets abroad in cooperation with

Things can get hairy off-piste

By Tim McGirk

I TOLD my Tibetan cook that I was going to Kashmir to search by helicopter for a beast whose tracks — larger than a man's — had been spotted by a Swiss ski guide near the summit of a 4,000m Himalayan peak. "It's the yeti," said Dolma matter-of-factly. Then she gave me a useful piece of advice. "Yeti's very angry. If yeti starts chasing you, never run up the mountain — always go down," Dolma said.

Why, I asked. My Tibetan cook replied with unfailing logic: "Yeti has long, long hair and when he runs down, hair falls in his eyes and he cannot see where he is going."

Whenever I told friends that I was off to look for weird animal tracks, they either laughed or offered strange bits of yeti lore. In Nepal several years back, I learnt, a Japanese tourist tried to buy a yeti scalp that was among sacred objects in a remote Buddhist monastery. It is hard to say what one could do with a yeti scalp — use it as a tea cosy? — but usually the abbot refused. That same night the red, shrivelled and hairy scalp was stolen, and the Japanese tourist was never seen again.

Someone else told me of a shepherd attacked one night by a creature larger than a bear. It burst into his hut and would have torn him apart if the dogs hadn't driven it off. This is supposed to have taken place in the same Kashmir range of the Himalayas where the ski guide found the mysterious tracks.

The only person who did not seem prepared to jump to the conclusion that the tracks belonged to the abominable snowman was the man who discovered them, Sylvain Saudan. "I don't know what kind of animal they belong to, but I'd like to find out," said Saudan, a skier and mountaineer. He had sent photographs of the tracks to the Natural Museum in Paris and to another museum in Munich requesting identification. "Both places said that although their studies were not conclusive, the tracks did not correspond to any known animal," says Saudan, who also sent copies of the photos to the National Geographic

Society in Washington and awaits its reply. "Judging from the prints, the Paris experts think this animal weighed about 48 kgs," Mr. Saudan says.

A robust, strong-jawed man in his fifties, Mr. Saudan is known in France and Switzerland as *sieur de l'impossible* for his daredevil exploits. He made his reputation skiing down near-vertical mountains in the Alps and Himalayas, where a fall meant instant death.

Now Mr. Saudan is running an outfit called Himalaya Heli-ski, which flies out of Kashmir. His clients are very, very rich European and Americans; they own department stores, factories and banks. They are the kind of people who collect antique Ferraris or who can afford to bring their private ski instructor with them to Kashmir (a week's heli-skiing costs £3,700). They are not your usual crack-brained abominable snowman hunters.

"I don't believe in yeti legends," says Mr. Saudan carefully, "but it's hard to think that in mountains as immense as the Himalayas there isn't something out there that we don't know about."

On 3 May 1991 at 10 a.m., Mr. Saudan spotted a new peak that looked ideal for skiing. It was high, more than 4,000m, with a broad, sweeping descent. There was no wind, and in the shadows cast by the rocky summit, the snow was still feathery. The pilot, Gilles Verdan, eased down the helicopter on the mountain's broad shoulder, about 100 metres from the summit. Mr. Saudan, along with another guide, Daniel Semblant, from Chamonix in France, and three other companions jumped out with their bundles of skis and poles. When the blizzard whipped up by the departing helicopter cleared, they had a fine view of the Himalayas. Then, not more than 20 metres from where the helicopter had left them, the skiers noticed the strange animal tracks.

"From a distance, I thought these are a man's tracks," recalls Mr. Saudan. "But there was no reason for a man to be up there — the nearest village was a three-day walk." He added: "This creature did not take the easy way up the mountain, otherwise we would

have seen its tracks, all the way up. No, this creature seems to have climbed up the back side of the mountain — a 1,000m wall of rock and ice. A bear couldn't have done it, and a man could only have done it if he had ropes and his name was Reinhold Messner."

Enraged, Mr. Saudan and his companions followed the tracks upwards towards the crest of the mountain. "When a man climbs in deep snow, he digs his toe in first, makes a little step. But whatever made these marks didn't climb like that. Its feet were flat against the snow," says Mr. Saudan. "I'm not a hunter, but to me, these tracks looked fairly fresh. In some of the tracks, you could see what looks like the imprint left by two large toes."

Mr. Saudan and his companions measured the tracks, which were bigger than a ski boot, and snapped off about 80 photographs. Seven skiers, the helicopter pilot and co-pilot all saw the tracks. The creature had walked up within easy range of the summit, then veered across the face of it before disappearing down the same sheer cliff of rock and ice. "A man never would have done that — a man would have climbed to the top and had a look around, after all that effort," Mr. Saudan says.

The party radioed back to the helicopter. Mr. Gilles, the pilot, zoomed down the back of the mountain and picked up the mysterious tracks as they crossed a wide snowfield. "I lost the trail in the rocks, and from there on down the valley it was all wooded," After 30 minutes, they called off the helicopter hunt. "I had the impression that he knew we were there and organised himself to get lost very quickly," Mr. Gilles says.

Mr. Saudan warned me that I would require the strongest possible luck to see this creature — or even its footprints — during two days' flying. We met at Himalaya Heli-ski's base at the Hotel Cetaur, set in the fruit orchards on the far side of Dal lake from Srinagar. Apart from Saudan's skiing clients, the hotel's other guests were all military officers. Indian security forces are fighting against Muslim separatists in the National Geographic

Kashmir, and at night, the sound of gunfire drifted across the lake from the old city. Few tourists dare venture into Kashmir these days.

The helicopter rippled across the lake, and we looped upwards, leaving behind the Moghul gardens and mustard fields and headed towards Tibet, entering into the vast, towering whiteness of the mountains. Gazing at the Himalayas, which cover thousands of square miles from Bhutan up to Afghanistan, Mr. Saudan and I talked of why, if a yeti does exist, it is not seen more often. "Most of the mountain people have no reason to go up into the peaks. They don't really know what's up there." The only humans who do venture deep into the Himalayas are mountaineers, says Mr. Saudan, but they are only interested in peaks above 5,000 metres, where there is little oxygen and no small animals or plants to sustain a 48 kg creature. The yeti, or whatever it is, evidently does not share man's desire to conquer mountains.

Mr. Gilles is an experienced mountain pilot who knows how to ride the icy updrafts rolling off the peaks, the way eagles do. As the Lama helicopter skims over blurred forests of white birch and pine, Mr. Verdan and his co-pilot scan the frozen landscape for signs of life. Rarely do they see anything. "I've been flying here for three years, and you know what I've seen? Two bears, a fox and a troupe of white, long-haired monkeys. That's all. There are so many places for an animal to hide," Mr. Verdan told me as the helicopter roared up through an icy ravine. In Europe, the treeline usually ends at about 3,000 metres. Here, temperatures are milder, and the forests often stretch up to 4,000 metres, giving cover and food to wildlife.

I cannot look at a mountain covered with snow, anywhere, without imagining how I would ski down it. After flying for half an hour, the temptation to give up the yetis bum and put on skis grew unbearable. Finally, Mr. Saudan directed the pilot to a south-facing peak, and the helicopter deposited us

at 4,000 metres and zoomed away. The silence was magnificent. Light-headed from the lack of oxygen and exhilaration, I felt weightless, as though I'd soon drift off the edge of the mountain and float. It was an agreeable sensation until I realized I was standing next to a 500 metres precipice. I backed away, anxious to join the other skiers' huddle. Mr. Saudan checked that our avalanche bleepers were on, and then he poled off, cutting turns like rhythmic explosions in the deep, sparkling powder. I followed, with more exuberance than grace. After a mile or so of steep, but not perilous, open bowls, we descended into a forest of pines and white birches that looked as though they were wrapped in parchment.

There were no yeti tracks, but I was past caring. The skiing was easier than I had imagined; a French couple in their mid-sixties, after initial jitters, were first into the helicopter, elated for a second run. We made nine runs down four mountains that day, about 30 kilometres of uninterrupted skiing. I had the wild impulse to withdraw all my life savings, pawn my furniture and have my children go without supper and shoes, just so that I could go again and again. Heli-skiing in the Himalayas is exquisitely addictive.

That evening, Mr. Saudan showed me photographs of the tracks, but he refuses to let them be published until the National Geographic Society has analysed them. "If National Geographic say they know what kind of creature made the tracks — a bear or something — then I'll drop the matter," Mr. Saudan claims. And if it is a yeti?

"I don't want to capture it. I've always thought this vast world of mountains is not like a dead, icy planet, and that it contains animals unknown to us. Maybe big ones. It would be enough to have proof that this creature does exist. But I'm not going to go charging off looking for it," Mr. Saudan says, laughing.

"The Himalayas are a big place. It's enough to see its footprints" — The Independent.



Pristine slopes for daring skiers in the Himalayas

Priorities could converge in Geneva

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Assad and Mr. Rabin out of the "you-first" cycle.

"The major strategic issues between Israel and Syria have already been resolved. It will be an opportunity in Geneva for Assad to explain what peace will mean when he gets guarantees of an Israeli pullout," said the diplomat.

Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam said two weeks ago that recognition of Israel and normalisation with Israel are negotiable. Mr. Rabin followed up on the comment saying he was ready to discuss full peace for full withdrawal.

Mr. Assad is unlikely to let Mr. Clinton down. He knows that the peace process has much to do with Syrian-American relations as it does with Syrian-Israeli relations.

In return for Mr. Assad's announcement, Mr. Clinton will likely stress the importance of Syria in the peace process and offer to play a full partner in Syrian-Israeli talks.

When the issue of Lebanon comes up in the three-hour meeting, Mr. Assad has no serious problems: Both Israel and the U.S. have tacitly accepted Syrian dominance of its neighbour and today Lebanon is treated as an afterthought.

In his travel last month to get the parties back to the negotiating table, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met twice with Mr. Assad, twice with Yasser Arafat, and once with King Hussein. Rafik Al Hariri, the

Lebanese prime minister, had to make due with a telephone call.

To guarantee Israel security on its northern border, Syria has to curb the Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Mr. Assad now has a greenlight from Tehran to do just that, according to diplomats. Iranian officials assured Damascus it will maintain its strong ties with Syria even if it arms Hezbollah and even if it signs a peace deal with Israel.

For Mr. Assad, improving relations with the sole superpower in the world today is a top priority. For the time being Syria will remain a member of the club of nations which the U.S. accuses of sponsoring "terrorism." But the U.S. could be paving the way in the future for removing Syria's name off the list, especially if there is a breakthrough in the peace process. The last State Department report notes "no evidence that Syrian officials have been directly involved in planning or executing terrorist attacks outside Lebanon since 1986."

Mr. Clinton will certainly raise the issue of Palestinian factions opposed to the peace process based in Syria. Mr. Assad provided a haven for opponents of the process, namely the 10 Palestinian groups known as the "Damascus 10."

Mr. Assad, in his fourth meeting with a U.S. president, will try to focus on bilateral issues and his role in the area in American thinking.

Syrian-American relations

have developed since Damascus joined a U.S.-led multinational force which drove Iraq from Kuwait in February 1991 and helped free Western hostages in Lebanon.

Mr. Assad has made several goodwill gestures to the U.S. ahead of the summit.

Syria, harshly critical of the PLO's secret deal with Israel, made a volte-face last week.

It joined seven other Arab states in describing the Israeli-PLO deal as the first step on the path to peace. "The ministers ... studied developments since the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli declaration of principles, which is considered as a first that should be complemented by steps on other tracks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region," said a communiqué issued by the foreign ministers of six Gulf countries and their allies — Syria and Egypt. This was not highlighted in the local press.

To win support on Capitol Hill, Mr. Assad gave exit visas to the last 800 Syrian Jews. He also is helping a U.S. congressional team investigating the fate of seven Israeli servicemen, who went missing in Lebanon in 1982.

Since the beginning of the peace process, Assad's main strategic goal is to improve relations with the U.S. This goal is more important than the Golan," said a European diplomat. "Assad is patient, he can wait for the Golan."

Simultaneous with the diplomatic approach to Syria, Washington has also been active in trying to induce Damascus to be more pragmatic in the peace process through incentives. It has implicitly approved the transfer to Syria of three American-made Boeing passenger planes from Kuwait — as a gift and is believed to have influenced a decision by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to announce a \$700 million aid package to Syria.

The European parliament recently unfroze an assistance programme for Syria.

Damascus, whose economy is relatively independent of the West, is known to be seeking aid with no strings attached, and is unlikely to accept any internationally-monitored aid along the lines that the Palestinians were promised after the signing of the Sept. 13 accord.

House endorses draft budget

(Continued from page 1)

Following are excerpts from Mr. Gammon's reply to the deputies:

— The government is trying through its various programmes and plans to address the problems of poverty and unemployment. The policy is to support certain segments of the population through subsidising basic commodities.

— The prime minister said the administrative reform and decentralisation programmes would lead to the creation of an effective bureaucracy and would be accompanied by legislation that would facilitate their success.

— Responding to criticism about Jordan's intention to join the GATT agreement, Dr. Majali said the Kingdom would join the agreement only under terms acceptable to it and in harmony with its policies.

— Dr. Majali also said the government plays a strong role in the economy, pointing out that the government's expenditure amounts to 35 per cent of the GDP and the public sector employs about 40 per cent of the labour force.

— He said Jordan's foreign debt had to be paid because the country stood to suffer more if it defaulted on paying back its debts.

— President of the Finance Committee Ali Abul Ragheb said that some deputies were influenced by ideological beliefs in their discussion of the budget, rejecting the accusations that the panel's recommendations were not adequate.

— The draft budget law will now be referred to the Upper House of Parliament. It will become law after it is approved by the Senate and signed by His Majesty the King.

Gulf war claims at least \$7b

(Continued from page 1)

Companies in Kuwait have submitted claims for corporate losses.

The Jordanian government has estimated at \$3 billion its national losses from the influx of over 350,000 citizens who were forced to leave Kuwait.

This covers costs of extra medical services, education and energy. It also reflects losses suffered by Jordanian corporations whose traditional Gulf markets disappeared.

me will also enable Jordan to get additional financial support in the form of grants and soft loans from other countries and international and regional organisations to address the gap in the balance of payments, which is estimated at about \$400 million annually, and this will help stabilise the Jordanian dinar exchange rates and increase Jordan's reserves of hard currency.

— The economic restructuring programme aims to achieve a six per cent growth in the GDP at constant rates and between 5.5 and 6.5 per cent during the programme's period from 1994-98.

— It also aims to reduce the deficit to 6.4 per cent of the GDP to 1993, and 5.5 per cent in 1994 and to reduce it gradually towards the end of the programme period to make it reach 2.5 per cent.

— The programme also provides for maintaining inflation at around 4.5 per cent during the programme period.

— Dr. Shaath said he was going to Tunis to attend a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee, due to start there Saturday and brief PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat on the Tabia talks, which are due to resume on Monday.

He will also hand Mr. Arafat a letter from President Hosni Mubarak on "Egyptian support for the Palestinian issue."

— Dr. Shaath, a top Arafat aide who leads the PLO delegation to the talks, charged in an interview with Egypt's Middle East news agency that

the budget and the 1994 budget shows a deficit of about JD 156 million, which might rise to JD 456 million if Jordan repays some of its debts. The deficit is estimated to be 5.8 per cent of the GDP in 1994, and this percentage is expected to drop to 5.3 per cent at the end of 1994.

— This budget is the first since 1963 which does not show an additional deficit after adding the expected grants and loans.

PLO upbeat over Geneva summit

(Continued from page 1)

Israel was stalling. "This might be because they are waiting for results of the Assad-Clinton summit or because we didn't accept the Cairo paper as a final agreement," he said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said as negotiations in Cairo ended Dec. 30 that "a meeting of the minds" was reached on introducing autonomy in Gaza and Jericho. The Israelis later portrayed it as a full-fledged agreement, which the PLO is quick to deny particularly on the question of border control.

"To sum up the situation of the talks now, it is conflict between the largest amount of Palestinian freedom and dignity and the eternal Israeli struggle for its security," Dr. Shaath said.

AL-MASHREK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

AMMAN - JORDAN

THE SCHOOL SEEKS TO EMPLOY A QUALIFIED ENGLISH TEACHER FOR THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE MUST HOLD A UNIVERSITY DEGREE, A TEACHING LICENSE IN JORDAN, AND AT LEAST TWO YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL.

INTERESTED CANDIDATES TO CALL :
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FOR APPOINTMENTS .

which look down on Israel's Galilee region and control the road to Damascus.

Mr. Clinton was on the last stop of a tour of Western and Eastern Europe that focused on NATO, Bosnia and nuclear disarmament. He has already visited Brussels, Prague, Moscow and Minsk.

Two years of Syrian-Israeli negotiations have produced no tangible results, and if Mr. Clinton comes away from

Word must stem population to feed itself, report says

WASHINGTON (R) — The world appears near the limit of its ability to produce more food, and its exploding population must be controlled if people are to be adequately fed in coming decades, the Worldwatch Institute said in a report released Saturday.

Growth in food production has slowed dramatically as the earth's ability to produce is being pushed to its limits, soil and water resources are being degraded and exhausted, and benefits from new technologies are diminishing, the annual "State of the World" report by the Washington think tank said.

"Achieving a humane balance between food and people now depends more on family planners than on farmers," said Lester Brown, Worldwatch president and the report's senior author.

Mr. Brown said the "growing demand for food and the earth's physical capacity to

satisfy those needs may dominate the next four decades as much as ideological conflict dominated the four decades from 1950 to 1990."

At a news briefing, Mr. Brown said this year's report was unusually grim because "we have enough data now.

Unfortunately, now I think we can see more of the constraints emerging more clearly," including a leveling off in grain yields and in the seafood catch.

This comes as the world's population is projected to jump by 3.6 billion, or 90 million annually, in the next 40 years.

"Seldom has the world faced an unfolding emergency whose dimensions are as clear as the growing imbalance between food and people," Mr. Brown said.

He said a growing awareness of the earth's limited capacity to produce food calls for reevaluating population policies, and increasing international

efforts to make family planning measures available.

The per capita seafood catch, which fell nine per cent from 1989 to 1993, likely will continue to drop, the report said.

Grain production, which expanded nearly three per cent annually between 1950 and 1984, since then has dropped to about one per cent annual growth — largely because expanded use of fertiliser no longer is yielding big returns.

Mr. Brown cited shrinking world rice stocks as Asia's consumption has outpaced production for the last three years and said Japan's farmers have not been able to increase yields over the last decade despite tremendous economic incentives.

"With grain yields now plateauing in some countries, with the fish catch unlikely to increase much, if at all, and with rangelands widely overgrazed, there is an urgent need

for national assessments of population-carrying capacity," the report said.

Mr. Brown recommended a global effort to assess food needs versus population growth for the next 40 years to provide "information needed to establish a public dialogue on choices in the tradeoff between family size and consumption levels."

"Without this global effort, countries with soaring import needs will have no way of knowing whether exportable supplies will be available," the report said.

And, Mr. Brown said, a global effort is needed to make family planning services available to all who want them.

He said a measure often cited as a key to feeding more people — cutting use of grain to feed livestock in the industrial countries and increasing food assistance to the developing world — would have little impact.

Oman authorises banks to raise \$300m loan

MANAMA (R) — Oman has authorised a group of four banks to arrange a \$300 million five-year syndicated loan, the sultanate's first sovereign borrowing in more than two years, bankers have said. The credit will be used for general purposes, helping to finance the budget deficit — forecast to be close to \$800 million in 1994 — as well as development projects, they said. The four arranging banks are the Bahrain-based Gulf International Bank (GIB), the Chase Manhattan Bank N.A. of the United States, Commerzbank A.G. of Germany and Japan's the Bank of Tokyo Ltd. Oman, which produces about 760,000 barrels per day of oil, has suffered from falling oil prices like other petroleum exporters. Discussions on this loan began several months ago before the sharp fall in prices. Its last loan, also for five years and \$300 million, was signed in October 1991.

PRAGUE (Agencies) — Jeffrey Sachs, the Harvard economist who advised President Boris Yeltsin, said Friday Western aid had failed to head off growing popular discontent in Russia because it did nothing to curb inflation.

In an interview with Reuters, Mr. Sachs was sharply critical of all aid packages offered so far, including one pledged by U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to Moscow last week.

Mr. Sachs, who works as an economic consultant for Mr. Yeltsin, said the best way to stabilise Russia's tottering economy would be to control inflation by using Western money to help shrink the state budget deficit, estimated this year at \$24 billion.

He said the Group of Seven (G-7) nations, the world's richest industrial countries, should put together a \$14 billion Western cash infusion to replace the piecemeal approach to aid the West had been following so far.

On Friday, the Clinton administration promised to work with G-7 countries to free up \$1.5 billion in International Monetary Fund (IMF) credits already planned as part of a Western aid package.

"(This) package...isn't really designed towards what I think is the greatest risk that the Russians face and what we face, which continuing very high inflation and high social instability in Russia," Mr. Sachs said.

"So, the nature of the package would have to be altered," he pointed out.

U.S. officials also said they were seeking additional funds from international banks for unemployment and hardship programmes to help cushion the speed of reform in Russia. But Mr. Sachs said these measures were inadequate not only because they fell short of the amount needed, but because the IMF-centred approach avoided the primary problem of monetary instability.

Mr. Sachs' Russian recipe for reform calls for stabilising the ruble by helping the government to stop printing money to finance the budget deficit. But he said the IMF refused to consider direct financing of the deficit because it first required politically sensitive cuts of up to 10 per cent in gross national product (GNP).

"They (the IMF) are living in a dream world, it (the IMF approach) is just not realistic," he said. "And so one has to make a realistic programme but actually put the numbers on the table. I doubt that even today in these meetings with Clinton...that this kind of scenario is being talked about."

Mr. Sachs, who was in Prague as the keynote speaker at

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 1994

Sachs says Western aid to Russia fails inflation test

an international bond conference, said a G-7 backed \$14 billion financial aid package, including either a direct loan or buying long-term Russian bonds, would remove half the 1994 budget deficit.

Moderate cuts in industrial subsidies would be offset by an increase in social safety-net spending, he said. The parallel sale of domestic Russian bonds would leave only about two per cent of GNP to be financed by printing money.

Mr. Sachs said a huge anti-Western backlash was building up in Russia because of a glaring discrepancy between Western promises of aid and Western delivery. Not more than \$5 billion of some \$28 billion in promised Western aid was delivered in 1993.

Leading Russian newspapers Friday ridiculed the amount of economic aid visiting President Clinton was offering Russia.

Noting Mr. Clinton's offer of about \$1 billion in new aid for the fiscal year, the liberal daily *Segodnya* newspaper said, "the sum is simply pathetic."

Mr. Clinton said Friday he would ask Congress for \$900 million in new aid to Russia in his budget for the next fiscal year, on top of \$2.5 billion voted for the current year.

He also said the United States would purchase \$12 billion worth of highly enriched uranium from Moscow over the next 20 years, and would provide technical assistance to help cushion the impact of economic reform on the Russian people.

Some Russian newspapers didn't seem to take the visit too seriously.

Rabochaya Tribuna, which means worker's tribune, ignored the summit.

Labour unrest in CFA zone may worsen with devaluation

ABIDJAN (R) — Devaluation of the CFA franc threatens to aggravate rising labour unrest in West and Central African states whose governments already have trouble meeting wage bills.

In theory, the parity adjustment from 50 to 100 to the French franc announced Tuesday night will give governments more cash in CFA terms to meet wage bills, but price rises for imports are also likely to trigger bigger wage demands.

Regional economists say while devaluation could boost industry in Cameroon and improve export earnings for Ivory Coast,

Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, it may only increase problems in poorer Sahel countries like Niger, Chad and Mali which depend on imports.

Ivory Coast is one of the franc zone's wealthier members but has been finding it increasingly hard to meet wage bills and suffered strikes in several sectors in late 1993.

The government came up with 30 billion CFA francs (\$102 million) at the end of the year to pay arrears in wages, student grants and retirement pensions.

The windfall prompted speculation in the opposition daily

La Voix as to whether the cash was a legacy from president Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who died on Dec. 7, a contribution from his wealthy successor Henri Konan Bédié, or aid from France.

In Chad, where provincial civil servants have not been paid for more than a year and the government has no cash to meet its wage bill, a public sector strike began on Jan. 3.

The government promised to pay two months' wages after France came up with 33.5 million French francs (\$5.7 million).

But the civil servants are still on strike because they say

officials in N'Djamena have received some of the cash and those in the provinces have nothing.

Cameroon's civil service has been paralysed for a month by a strike over 30 per cent wage cut announced last November.

State radio said Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu issued a strongly worded communiqué calling on strikers to return to work without delay and warning of unspecified measures to sanctions anyone who refused.

The students' grants have not been paid for eight months. In January 1993, the university cancelled teaching for the academic year because

are closed or maintaining only emergency cover. Magistrates went on strike at the beginning of the year.

In neighbouring Central African Republic, striking customs workers complain they have not been paid for 15 months.

Further north in landlocked Niger, the government closed Niamey University Friday after students hurling stones and petrol bombs battled riot police firing tear gas.

The students' grants have not been paid for eight months. In January 1993, the university cancelled teaching for the academic year because

of lack of funds.

Economists say with falling prices for its principal export, uranium, and manufacturing dependent on imports, Niger stands to lose from devaluation.

The CFA franc has been pegged at 50 to the French franc since 1948. In the past decade, a combination of falling commodity prices, loose fiscal and monetary policy and the appreciation of the French franc against the dollar has pushed up the CFA franc's value against other currencies and loss of competitiveness has

paralysed regional economies.

Ivory Coast plunges into deep end with reforms

ABIDJAN (R) — Ivory Coast pushed ahead with its radical economic shake-up Friday and made no secret that the reforms triggered by a massive devaluation would be painful.

Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan announced price rises for petrol and rice but maintained his government's relatively upbeat approach despite fears of inflation and labour unrest.

"When your mother puts alcohol on your wounds it hurts but you knew it was for your long-term good," he said.

But at a three-hour news conference, he said social peace was essential for the rebuilding of the economy to succeed.

In a veiled warning to labour leaders already wanting big pay increases, Mr. Duncan quoted late president Félix Houphouët-Boigny's maxim that disorder would not be tolerated.

After 46 years of unchanged parity against the French franc, Ivory Coast and 12 other West and Central African states on Tuesday devalued their common currency, the CFA franc, by 50 per cent.

As the biggest and most modern economy in the CFA zone, Ivory Coast stands more to gain than smaller nations if it can keep inflation in check.

Mr. Duncan promised massive debt relief and injections of funds from Western nations, the IMF and the World Bank who withdrew support largely because of the over-valued CFA parity.

He predicted foreign investment in Ivory Coast this year would be 660 billion CFA (\$1.1 billion) and put growth at two per cent in 1994, compared with a zero level in 1993, rising to five to six per cent in 1995.

The success of the reform programme in Ivory Coast is vital to IMF and World Bank

hopes of reviving Africa's economy, the weakest in the world.

Failure will undermine efforts in the rest of the CFA zone.

"This is going to work." There will be no failure," top World Bank official Olivier Lafourcade told reporters in Abidjan.

But the history of devaluations in non-CFA countries has been no great success and was for years France's argument for resisting any change in the CFA parity.

The government announced salary increases for civil servants of between five and 15 per cent, much less than the inflation rate projections of government economists.

Private sector workers will have to negotiate the best deal they can with employers.

"We have already asked for 25 per cent," said Raymond Djadjou, head of the Bank Workers' Union.

Traders say they have to increase to settle outstanding bills to foreign suppliers or to finance new stocks.

Prices for both imported and local goods have soared in most of the 13 West and Central African countries which devalued their French-backed CFA by 50 per cent Tuesday.

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TAURUS: (April 21 to May 20) If you exude charm and magnetism, you are able to gain favour with others from their problems, too.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You are now highly inspired how best to help others with their civic as well as personal problems, which indirectly also helps you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) By listening to the wise words of inspired preacher today, you find that you can raise your level of consciousness, so that life becomes more fruitful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) New systems come to your attention today and night which you would do well in plan to adopt for greater success and prestige in the future.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Rely on fine standards under which you were reared in planning future activities today, since they will stand you in good stead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Show your better nature

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 16, 1994
By Thomas S Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Eight good aspects make this a very special day when you should be able to handle delicate subjects with tact, finesse and good humor creating more accord with close associates and co-workers...

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19)

Begin to live your life in such a way today that you become an inspiring example to others. Use that mental brilliance to help others with their problems, too.

TAURUS: (April 21 to May 20)

If you exude charm and magnetism, you are able to gain favour with others from their problems, too.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22

to December 21) You are now highly inspired how best to help others with their civic as well as personal problems, which indirectly also helps you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) By listening to the wise words of inspired preacher today, you find that you can raise your level of consciousness, so that life becomes more fruitful.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It would be well to sit quietly by yourself for sometime and permit your intuitions to go to work for you.

PISCES: (February 21 to March 20) Get in touch with associates informally today so that you can come to a better understanding and operate more efficiently together in the days to come.

THE Daily Crossword

by Avery P. Bromfield

1	Deceptive point	2	6	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66</

Sarajevo shelling eases after Bosnia threatens to boycott talks

SARAJEVO (R) — Shelling eased in the besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo Saturday after the Bosnian prime minister threatened to pull out of Geneva peace talks.

But rivals continued fighting in central Bosnia, cutting off aid routes where the United Nations said it had to use force to extricate a blocked convoy.

After a day of shelling by Serbs marking their Orthodox New Year in which six people were killed, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic threatened to boycott peace talks in Geneva next week unless the shelling of Sarajevo stopped.

Sarajevo Radio said Friday: "Speaking about the future of the Geneva talks, Silajdzic stressed that if the aggressor continues to destroy Sarajevo and other towns and to kill civilians during the Geneva talks, the talks will not be held."

Bosnia's Serb, Muslim and Croat factions are due to meet in the Swiss city next week to try to end the 21-month-old conflict. Talks between Muslims and Croats in Bonn this week ended without agreement.

Duchess of Kent converts to Catholicism

LONDON (R) — Cardinal Basil Hume, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, Friday received the Duchess of Kent into the Roman Catholic Church after she left the establishment by deciding to leave the Church of England.

The Duchess Katharine was the first British royal to convert since King Charles II, who turned to Catholicism on his deathbed in 1685. In doing so, she went against an early 18th century law forbidding members of the monarchy from becoming Catholic.

The historic 45-minute ceremony was carried out by Cardinal Hume in a private ceremony at the archbishop's house, near the houses of parliament in central London, and the Duchess, 60, was accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Kent, who is grand master of the Mason's United Grand Lodge of England.

During the ceremony, the deeply religious Duchess made a simple pledge to adopt her new faith: "I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God."

Cardinal Hume said afterwards: "She seemed very peaceful and at ease." Asked what the occasion meant for the Church of England, the cardinal would only say: "I have been through a marvelous spiritual experience tonight and I want to leave it at that."

Britain's monarch, Queen Elizabeth, is the head of the Church of England, created in the 16th century after Henry VIII broke with Rome so that he could divorce and remarry, and the duchess needed special permission to leave the church.

As well as her husband, Edward, who is 18th in line to Queen Elizabeth's throne, the duchess was accompanied by their three children in the ceremony.

A spokesman for the elegant and popular duchess said her move had nothing to do with the Church of England's decision to ordain women priests, which has alienated many churchgoers and prompted some of them to join the Catholic Church.

Traditionally, a member of the royal family who has married a Catholic has had to renounce any claim to the throne, but because the duchess was an Anglican at the time of her marriage the Duke of Kent's position will be unaffected.

Their son renounced his right to succession when he married Canadian Catholic divorcee Sylvana Tomasselli in 1988.

The Anglican Church's spiritual head, George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, called the duchess's step a "personal decision of a devout Christian on a spiritual journey."

Friends of the duchess, seen every year by tennis fans handing out trophies at the Wimbledon tournament, said her conversion to Catholicism was purely personal.

Only a few muffled shell bursts were heard in the capital, enshrouded in heavy fog, Saturday morning, reporters based at Sarajevo's Holiday Inn Hotel said.

The United Nations said Serbs fired about 300 artillery and mortar rounds into the city Friday and Muslims responded with only 11 rounds.

The shelling, similar to an attack last year that marked the Orthodox New Year, was further defiance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which threatened air strikes against Serbs unless they released their grip on the city.

The speaker of the self-styled Bosnian Serb Republic's parliament, Momcilo Krajkovic, issued the latest in a series of bellicose statements by the Serbs in response to the threat of NATO military action against them.

The fighting has cut off the main aid routes into central Bosnia where 1.5 million people are dependent on outside aid to survive the harsh Balkan winter.

A U.N. aid convoy moved stranded Saturday and its leader pledged that, however long it took, he would get a relief convoy through to a

besieged Muslim enclave being blocked by local Croats.

"I am prepared to stay forever. Because at the end of the day we will win," said Larry Hollingsworth, a representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who has tried for three days to negotiate clearance for the convoy destined for the besieged Muslim enclave of Maglaj.

About 60 people blocked the road for a third day, demanding the Muslim-led Bosnian army free Croat prisoners in Maglaj in exchange for the release of Muslim detainees.

Another convoy was blocked between Gornji Vakuf and Novi Travnik Friday by about 200 Muslims complaining that they had not received enough humanitarian aid, Col. Aikman said.

"There was concern that another incident would occur in the area as a large amount of flour was taken off vehicles (in a previous convoy)," he said.

Col. Aikman said the convoy moved on only after a British U.N. military contingent escorting the convoy fired 15 rounds into the air to disperse the crowd.

"I believe the greatness of a nation is the ability to redefine itself for every age and time," Mr. Clinton told a televised Russian Town Hall Meeting. "The young people of Russia now have the chance to show that a great power can promote patriotism without expansionism, that a great power can promote national pride without national prejudice. That, I submit, is your challenge."

Mr. Clinton spoke to the people of Russia via Ostankino, the central television centre that was the focus of the Oct. 3 showdown between President Boris Yeltsin's loyalists and anti-reform forces, "Ostankino." Mr. Clinton said, "stands as a symbol of the power of free expression and of the brave sacrifices the Russian people have been making."

Mr. Clinton's opening remarks sketched the themes of his state visit to Russia — his vision of a peaceful, politically and economically integrated Europe without ideological divisions. He then took questions from the studio audience.

His original choice, Steffen Heitmann, the justice minister of Saxony state, proved an acute political embarrassment to Mr. Kohl, pulling out of the race after coming under fire over his arch-conservative views.

The decision means Mr. Herzog will almost certainly be the chief rival of Social Democratic candidate Johannes Rau, premier of North-Rhine-Westphalia State, when the president is elected in May — a milestone in the run-up to October's general election.

The popular Weizsaecker must step down after completing a maximum of two five-year terms in the symbolic post.

Mr. Herzog, 59-year-old president of the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe and a CDU member, was nominated at a CDU leadership committee meeting in Windhagen near Bonn which he attended.

Mr. Kohl told reporters 34 committee members voted for Mr. Herzog, with one abstention and one vote against.

Mr. Herzog was "the right person at a difficult time of transition for our fatherland," Mr. Kohl said, praising his directness and sense of humor.

Mr. Herzog, a stocky, white-haired man of the southern state of Bavaria and a specialist on international law, has not yet formally accepted the nomination.

He said he wanted to await the final decision of the CDU's Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), which has already nominated him informally.

Russia's Baltic force gets tough order

MOSCOW (R) — Russian troops in Latvia and Estonia have been told to return fire and shoot to kill if there are any attempts to seize their military installations, a Russian military statement said Friday. The North Western Command of Russian forces, which covers the Baltic region, issued the order following the temporary detention of two Russian generals and the blocking of four of their military installations in Latvia on Jan. 10. The order, read out on Commonwealth Television, said Russian troops had been instructed to "return fire and shoot to kill" in the event of any attempt to seize military installations.

The Jan. 10 incident in which the two generals were led away by Latvian Civil Defence units prompted Moscow to declare a military alert. Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis dismissed an official, Andrejs Rucs, whose decision to seize two Russian army buildings had sparked the incident. The brief detention of Major-Generals Nikolai Taitakov and Anatoly Vodopyanov had threatened to further damage relations between the two states, which are holding talks over the withdrawal of former Soviet troops from Latvia.

German wheelchair girl surrenders

BERLIN (R) — A handicapped schoolgirl who disappeared after apparently making up a story about Skinheads carving a Swastika on her cheek has surrendered to authorities. German police said Saturday.

A spokesman in Halle said the 17-year-old, who uses a wheelchair, vanished Thursday after police launched a nationwide search for three skinheads she claimed had attacked her Monday. Doctors have told investigators they believe the Nazi-emblem cut on her face was self-inflicted. "We now know where the girl is," the spokesman said. "She is with her parents at a relative's house at a location far away from Halle. The relatives phoned us this morning. The girl is expected to be back in Halle tomorrow."

Saxony-Anhalt State Prosecutor Juergen Hossfeld said investigators had concluded the girl made up the story about the attack that had shocked a nation struggling to come to terms with a rise in right-wing violence.

AIDS has hit 3 million people

GENEVA (R) — An estimated three million people worldwide have developed full-scale AIDS since the disease was first identified in the late 1970s, the United Nations' World Health Organisation (WHO) said Saturday. But in a twice-yearly report, it estimated around 14 million adults and one million children have developed the HIV infection — which the WHO and many leading medical authorities say causes AIDS. The estimates — far higher than formally reported figures — represent an increase of half a million in AIDS cases since the last report in July and of one million in the incidence of adult HIV infections.



U.S. President Bill Clinton speaks during a meeting with Russian youth at the Ostankino Television session in Moscow (AFP photo)

Clinton challenges Russian youth to redefine the nation's future

MOSCOW (USIA) — President Bill Clinton challenged Russia's young people to redefine their country's future as that of a peaceful nation intent on encouraging all its citizens to reach their full human potential.

"I believe the greatness of a nation is the ability to redefine itself for every age and time," Mr. Clinton told a televised Russian Town Hall Meeting. "The young people of Russia now have the chance to show that a great power can promote patriotism without expansionism, that a great power can promote national pride without national prejudice. That, I submit, is your challenge."

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Zhirinovsky wants to head Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee — report

MOSCOW (AFP) — Far-right leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky is among four candidates from his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) vying to chair four committees in the state Duma, the Interfax News Agency Saturday quoted a Russian report as saying.

Zhirinovsky had agreed with international experts on the gravity of the North Korean nuclear programme because of mounting foreign pressure and spiralling costs, the national Yonhap News Agency Saturday quoted a Russian report as saying.

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Sports

Harding accused of part in Kerrigan attack

PORLAND, Oregon (AP)

The bodyguard of figure skater Tonya Harding has accused her of planning the attack on her rival Nancy Kerrigan, a television report said, after he and two other men were charged in the assault.

Bodyguard Shawn Eric Eckhardt, in a statement to NBC news Friday, accused Harding with the "planning and cover-up" of the Jan. 6 attack on Olympic figure skater Kerrigan after a practice session at the U.S. figure skating championships in Detroit, Michigan.

The assault left Kerrigan with an injured knee, which she said Friday she expected to back on the ice "in the next few days."

Citing sources close to the official inquiry into the attack, NBC said that no arrest warrant had been served on Harding, but that she was the subject of an "active criminal investigation."

Earlier Oregon prosecutor John Bradley had declined to confirm reports that Harding was under criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, the Washington post reported Saturday that the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) is to ask Harding to

withdraw from the Winter Olympic Games, which get under way Feb. 12 in Lillehammer, Norway, because her presence there would create a "logistical nightmare."

USOC's Executive Director Harvey Schiller had denied such reports late Friday.

Harding won the women's title in Detroit in Kerrigan's absence, and the two had been chosen for the U.S. Olympic team.

USOC officials earlier said Harding's place on the team was safe so long as she was not implicated in the attack.

Kerrigan has refused to comment on her teammate's possible involvement.

Eckhardt, together with alleged assailant Shane Stant and Stant's uncle Derrick Brian Smith, were in custody Friday charged with conspiring in December to harm Kerrigan.

Authorities said the investigation into the alleged plot was continuing.

Eckhardt's lawyer Mark McKnight said his client had admitted involvement in the attack in which a man, allegedly Stant, bit Kerrigan in the leg with a metal bar.

But McKnight added after Eckhardt's arraignment that his



Nancy Kerrigan

client was "not smart enough" to have masterminded the assault.

Oregon prosecutor John Bradley earlier declined to confirm that Harding was under criminal investigation.

"Not at this time," Bradley said. "We are investigating everything. We are going to be complete as we can. Whatever you make of that."

He said earlier in the day that more people could be charged.

Earlier in the week, various news reports alleged Harding's ex-husband Jeff Gillooly had

been involved in the attack.

Eckhardt and Smith were arrested Thursday and Stant surrendered to authorities in Phoenix, Arizona Friday.

Indictments against the trio charged that they conspired in December in Portland, Oregon, to "unlawfully and intentionally cause physical injury to Nancy Kerrigan by means of a dangerous weapon, by means of striking Nancy Kerrigan in the leg with the dangerous weapon."

If convicted, they could face up to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PLO to express concern over Israel-Vatican deal

TUNIS (R) — Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) delegation left Tunis on Saturday for talks with Vatican officials in which they will express worries about the consequences of the Israel-Vatican deal last month for Jerusalem. "The PLO delegation will discuss with the Vatican the negative consequences of the agreement on the status of Jerusalem," PLO spokesman Yasser Arafat said. Israel and the Vatican signed an agreement last month recognising each other and clearing the way for full diplomatic ties. Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi, a PLO Executive Committee member who heads the delegation, said he would remind the Vatican of a U.N. resolution declaring illegal Israel's annexation of the east of the city after the 1967 war. "We will discuss also the expansion of Jewish settlements in Arava (East) Jerusalem and the nature of the future relations between the PLO and the Vatican," he said before leaving Tunis.

Canadian official under fire in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFPI) — Palestinian hardliners on Saturday charged a visiting Canadian official, Marc Perron, with seeking the permanent settlement in Lebanon some 350,000 Palestinian refugees. Mr. Perron, who arrived Wednesday in Lebanon and began touring Palestinian refugee camps, heads the Middle East Department at the Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry and is chairman of the refugees committee in line with the Middle East peace process. His visit "is in line with suspicious attempts to cancel U.N. Resolution 194 and to force our people into settling (in Lebanon) on the pretext of serving them," said a statement issued by four Palestinian organisations opposed to the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) deal on Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories. The Popular and Democratic fronts for the liberation of Palestine, the statement's main signatories, urged "the Arab states concerned with the Palestinian people's fate to provide them with sufficient aid... until they recover their legitimate rights." Mr. Perron voiced concern on his tour of the camps over "the lack of interest regarding the Palestinian diaspora" since the Israeli-PLO accord was signed in Washington on Sept. 13. He said a delegation of his committee on Palestinian refugees would visit Lebanon "to obtain air for reconstruction, education and jobs" in the camps. "This visit will not harm the right of Palestinians to return," he added.

Iran studies pardon plea for German

TEHRAN (AFPI) — Iran's Justice Department is reviewing an official request from Germany to pardon Helmut Szimkus, a German engineer sentenced to death here on charges of spying for Iraq. Tehran Radio reported Saturday. A spokesman for Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi told the radio that the request had not yet been submitted to Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the only official qualified to pardon. Mr. Szimkus since the German's death sentence was upheld by the supreme court earlier this month. The pardon plea was being reviewed by experts, the spokesman said. In Bonn on Friday German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel made an urgent appeal to three Iranian lawmakers for Mr. Szimkus, 59, to be pardoned. Mr. Kinkel told Mohammad-Javad Larijani, a member of the national Security Council, that Germany considered Mr. Szimkus case to be "extremely serious." (see page 2)

Bus bombs kill three in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — Three people were killed and 20 were injured in central Turkey when time-bombs hidden in luggage exploded on inter-city buses, police said Saturday. No group claimed responsibility for the Friday night blasts which damaged four buses, they added. Rebel Kurds have attacked buses in south east Turkey in the past but this was the first use of bombs. The semi-official Anatolian news agency said police were now searching all luggage on buses entering and leaving Istanbul. Security officials in southeast Turkey, meanwhile, said troops had killed seven Kurdish separatists in clashes.

Hekmatyar: Arabs will not be expelled

PESHAWAR (AFPI) — Afghan Premier Guluddin Hekmatyar says he will never comply with requests to force Islamic fighters from Egypt or other countries to return home, according to a report here Saturday. "They are our brothers," he was quoted as saying by the Pakistani daily the Frontier Post. "They fought at our side against the Soviet army. It wasn't us who had them. It was Egypt and the other countries now opposed to their presence in Afghanistan who encouraged them to come here to fight communism" during the long Soviet occupation of the country. Egypt has asked the Afghan authorities to extradite several Islamic fundamentalists, among them Mohammad Mekawi, spokesman for a movement which has been implicated in the assassination attempt on Egyptian Premier Atef Sedki in November. Egyptian press reports have said Moustapha Hamza, another Islamic fundamentalist leader who was condemned to death in absentia in Egypt, is also in Afghanistan.

1 killed in Lebanese building collapse

TRIPOLI (AP) — A four-storey building which was badly damaged in the Lebanese civil war collapsed Saturday, killing a woman and injuring at least three people, a police source said. The structure, hit during fighting in this northern port city in the late stages of the 1975-90 war, had about a dozen dwellers, the source said. The woman, identified as 70-year-old Badriya Al Ali, was the only person inside when the building crumbled, according to police. Troops were dispatched to the site as rescuers worked to retrieve Ms. Ali's body from the rubble. The other victims were passersby. They suffered minor injuries and were treated in hospital. A civil defence official at the scene said the collapse was the result of damage caused by fighting on the demarcation line between the Goba and Tabbaneh neighbourhoods.

Major: 'No real role' in Iraq arms rules

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major has told Britain's arms-for-Iraq inquiry that he had no significant role in setting or adjusting guidelines on sales of defence-related equipment to Baghdad, the Financial Times reported Saturday. In written evidence to the inquiry ahead of his appearance, before Lord Justice Scarf on Monday, Mr. Major emphasised that during his time as finance minister and foreign minister he was not party to relaxation of rules, said the newspaper. Mr. Major set up the inquiry in 1992 to investigate whether British ministers knowingly broke guidelines governing arms sales to Iraq before the 1991 Gulf war. His aides maintain the prime minister has nothing to fear from the inquiry, which is trying to discover whether the Conservative government turned a blind eye as British firms helped build Iraq's war machine in the 1980s. Current Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke said on Thursday he would resign if the inquiry found he was at fault in signing key documents.

Pakistan is behind violence — India

NEW DELHI (AFPI) — The arrest of 35 people for a series of bombing raids during the past two years has revealed their links with Pakistani military intelligence, India's security minister said Saturday. "It is clear that they have a nationwide network and are bent on creating trouble with support from Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI)," Internal Security Minister Rajesh Pilot said in the southern city of Hyderabad. Mr. Pilot's assertion came a day after the arrest following police raids in the cities of Bombay and Lucknow. Thirty-five people including a Bombay doctor, Mohammed Jalis Ansari, his brother and accomplices were charged with the bombings of trains, stations and public places which left 25 dead since 1992. Mr. Pilot said the suspects had links with the ISI and that Dawood Ibrahim was the key

Clinton hails Belarus, offers more aid



U.S. President Bill Clinton salutes before boarding Air Force One with his wife Hillary on Saturday at Vanuikovo II airport in Minsk, Belarus

siles and to convert defence industries to peaceful use.

This brings the total U.S. aid available to Belarus for anti-nuclear work to \$101 million.

Arriving from Moscow on a gray, chilly morning, Mr. Clinton signed a treaty with Mr. Shushkevich intended to lure American businesses here by offering legal protections for investments. Mr. Clinton also approved formation of an American trade centre.

President Clinton also said Saturday his trip to Russia had strengthened ties with reformers there and stressed it was still important for the United States to remain engaged in Europe.

Belarus's disarmament decision also was celebrated by Mr. Clinton in a champagne toast with Mr. Shushkevich at a guest house built for the 1974 visit of then-President Richard Nixon.

In part, Mr. Clinton's trip was intended to demonstrate to Belarus's decision to dismantle and ship to Russia 72 SS-25 strategic nuclear missiles left here after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Mr. Clinton said the country could have kept the weapons and "rattled them around."

Instead, he said, it made a "braver and better choice to live nuclear-free," recognising that "real security lies in integrating with your neighbours."

Mr. Clinton told Belarus Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich that an additional \$25 million in U.S. funds would go for the scrapping of the former Soviet state's 81 nuclear mis-

The NATO plan is to close ranks with Eastern Europe initially through joint military exercises.

Also on Mr. Clinton's brief Belarus schedule was a stop at the Katyn memorial, burial ground for tens of thousands of Belarusians killed by Josef Stalin between 1937 and 1941. The only marking at the memorial was a ribbon-draped cross in a snowy, soggy marsh.

President Clinton also said Saturday his trip to Russia had strengthened ties with reformers there and stressed it was still important for the United States to remain engaged in Europe.

In his weekly radio speech, which was taped before he left the Kremlin on Saturday, Mr. Clinton said his meeting in Moscow "brought us to a new season of partnership, warm partnership with Russia's reformers."

The U.S. president told radio listeners back home it was important to stay engaged in Europe in the post-cold war era because American national security is ultimately still at stake.

"Many nations in the former Soviet bloc are fighting economic hardship that could threaten their democracies. In many of these countries, militant nationalists are fanning the flames of ancient, ethnic

and religious hatreds," he said. "And we still have to finish the work of reducing the cold war nuclear stockpiles. We can't afford to ignore these challenges."

Mr. Clinton headed for Switzerland later Saturday for the last stop on his six-nation European tour. On Sunday, Mr. Clinton will seek a breakthrough in stalled Middle East peace talks in a meeting with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva.

Several dozen communist protesters demonstrated against Mr. Clinton's visit. They carried signs telling Mr. Clinton "don't interfere" and saying "the USSR exists and it will exist."

While Minsk has moved quickly on arms control, it has been slow to adopt political reforms. Popular elections have not been held nor has a new constitution been adopted.

Before departing Moscow Saturday morning, Mr. Clinton said farewell to Mr. Yeltsin in the Kremlin's St. George's Hall, the gleaming white and gold, cavernous room where they opened talks with a handshake on Thursday. He left Russia amid considerable pomp at the airport, with a military band playing the Russian and U.S. national anthems and "Stars and Stripes Forever."

Two million claims filed against Iraq



Hillary wows them in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — More than two million claims have been filed by people claiming they suffered losses because of Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Friday.

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